

09/30/

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

FRP: 92, 9, 95, 9, 98

STATE

25X1

82 7852292 SCO

PAGE 001

NC 7852292

TOR: 211938Z JAN 82

25X1

OO RUEA11B  
 ZNY CCCCC ZOC STATE ZZH  
 UTS3119  
 OO RUEHC  
 DE RUQMBE #0486/01 0211500  
 ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
 O 211435Z JAN 82  
 FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
 TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5013  
 INFO RUQMBI/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI 1562  
 RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 5342  
 RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 7591  
 RUEHDN/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 1631  
 RUQMUD/AMEMBASSY DOHA 429  
 RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 7214  
 RUEHJI/AMEMBASSY JIDDA 892  
 RUQMKW/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT 7663  
 RUEHLD/AMEMBASSY LONDON 5595  
 RUQMAM/AMEMBASSY MANAMA 801  
 RUQMMT/AMEMBASSY MUSCAT 490  
 RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1164  
 RUDKKR/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 2704  
 BT

C D N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 0486 COMBINED SECTION

EXDIS

E.O. 12065: GDS 1/21/88 (DILLON, ROBERT SL.) OR-M  
 TAGS: UREP (PERCY, CHARLES H.) LE  
 SUBJECT: CONVERSATION BETWEEN SENATOR PERCY AND FORMER PRIME  
 MINISTER SA'B SALAM

1. (C-ENTIRE TEXT)

2. WE INVITED FORMER PRIME MINISTER SA'B SALAM IN HIS  
 CAPACITY AS PERHAPS SENIOR SUNNI POLITICAL LEADER IN

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CONFIDENTIAL

STATE

82 7852292 SCO

PAGE 002

NC 7852292

TOR: 211938Z JAN 82

LEBANON TO HAVE BREAKFAST WITH SENATOR PERCY AND SENATE STAFFER BANNERMAN MORNING OF JAN 20. SALAM, AN ARTICULATE SPOKESMAN FOR POINT OF VIEW OF BEIRUT'S TRADITIONAL SUNNI ESTABLISHMENT, MADE A NUMBER OF POINTS:

3. SYRIAN RULE IN LEBANON: SALAM WAS SCATHING WITH REGARD TO THE SYRIAN ROLE IN LEBANON. DESPITE ANY CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE THE SYRIAN PRESENCE MIGHT HAVE ONCE PLAYED, IT WAS ESSENTIAL, IN HIS VIEW, THAT THE SYRIANS SOMEHOW BE GOTTEN OUT. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT A PRECIPITATE SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL RIGHT AWAY MIGHT BRING CHAOS BUT FELT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO STRENGTHEN CENTRAL GOVERNMENT FORCES ENOUGH TO PERMIT SUCH A WITHDRAWAL AT AN EARLY DATE. HE DID NOT SUGGEST THAT THE US OUGHT TO SOMEHOW THROW THE SYRIANS OUT BUT HOPED THAT WE WOULD USE OUR INFLUENCE IN DAMASCUS AND IN OTHER ARAB CAPITALS (PARTICULARLY WITH THE SAUDIS OF COURSE) TO CREATE A SITUATION IN WHICH THE SYRIANS COULD BE WITHDRAWN. SALAM SAW A RUSSIAN HAND IN SYRIAN ACTIVITIES BUT DID NOT PUSH THE IDEA THAT THE RUSSIANS WERE IN SOME FASHION ORCHESTRATING SYRIAN ACTIONS IN LEBANON. RATHER, HE SAW A CONNECTION BETWEEN A CONTINUED SYRIAN PRESENCE IN THIS COUNTRY AND THE STABILITY OF THE ASSAD REGIME AT HOME -- A STABILITY IN WHICH THE RUSSIANS HAVE A GREAT STAKE.

4. PALESTINIANS: SALAM SAW THE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON AS A MAJOR INGREDIENT IN THE PROBLEM. WHILE PERSONALLY SYMPATHETIC TO THE PLIGHT OF THE PALESTINIANS HE FELT THAT THE LEBANESE PROBLEM COULD NOT BE SOLVED UNLESS SOME PALESTINIANS DEPARTED FOR A HOMELAND AND THOSE WHO REMAINED WERE BROUGHT UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT. HE URGED THAT THE US WORK MORE DIRECTLY AND MORE ACTIVELY TO FIND A SOLUTION FOR THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM, WHICH AGGRAVATED EVERY OTHER PROBLEM.

5. US-ISRAELI RELATIONS: WARMING TO HIS SUBJECT, SALAM SAID THAT THE FUNDAMENTAL FLAW IN US POLICY TOWARD THE AREA WAS ITS ONE-SIDED SUPPORT OF ISRAEL. THE US HAD EARNED THE ENMITY OF MANY ARABS BY ITS TOTAL SUPPORT OF THE ISRAELI STATE AND ITS INDIFFERENCE TO THE FATE OF THE ARAB POPULATION OF PALESTINE. THE RESULT WAS BOTH THE CREATION OF EASILY EXPLOITABLE OPPORTUNITIES

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

STATE

82 7852292

SCU

PAGE 003

NC 7852292

TOR: 211938Z JAN 82

FOR THE SOVIETS AND THE INCREASING RADICALIZATION OF YOUNGER ARABS EVERYWHERE. HE DREW A DISTINCTION BETWEEN RADICAL AND MODERATE ARABS. MODERATES, LIKE HIMSELF, BELIEVED THAT THE US, DESPITE ITS GOOD WILL, ALLOWED ITSELF TO BE MANIPULATED BY ISRAEL AND ITS SUPPORTERS. RADICAL ARABS TENDED TO THE BELIEF THAT THE US WAS AN IMPERIALIST POWER WHICH USED ISRAEL AS ITS INSTRUMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST. MOST ARABS, SALAM THOUGHT, WERE PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE EXISTENCE OF A JEWISH STATE, PROVIDED THERE WAS ALSO A STATE FOR THE PALESTINIANS. HE ALSO THOUGHT THAT THE OBVIOUS CONTEMPT IN WHICH THE ISRAELIS HELD THE US WAS EXTREMELY DAMAGING TO AMERICAN PRESTIGE AND AMERICAN ABILITY TO CARRY OUT A COHERENT MIDDLE EASTERN POLICY. THE CHIEF BENEFICIARY, IN HIS VIEW, WAS THE SOVIET UNION. AT ONE POINT HE MADE A PASSIONATE PLEA TO THE SENATOR FOR THE US TO INDULGE IN "STATESMANSHIP AND NOT POLITICS" (AN OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO INTERNAL US POLITICS). FINALLY, HE DEPLORED ISRAELI ABILITY TO ENGAGE THE US IN HAGGLING OVER TRIVIA, WHILE EVADING MAJOR ISSUES, E.G., WEST BANK SETTLEMENTS.

EXDIS

6. US REACTION TO GOLAN ANNEXATION: SALAM DID NOT ARGUE THAT THE GOLAN ANNEXATION WAS IN ITSELF A MAJOR ISSUE BUT HE DID ARGUE THAT US REACTION WAS BEING CLOSELY WATCHED BY ALL ARABS TO SEE WHETHER THE US WAS FREE TO ACT IN ITS OWN INTERESTS. IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT, HE STRESSED, THAT THE US NOT REVERSE THE SUSPENSION OF THE MOU BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE US UNTIL ISRAEL HAD MADE SOME GESTURE WHICH COULD JUSTIFY IT. (HE WAS OBVIOUSLY SKEPTICAL THAT THERE WOULD BE SUCH A GESTURE.) HE WAS SURPRISED WHEN SENATOR SAID THERE MIGHT BE AN INCREASE IN AID TO ISRAEL IN 1983 AND CALLED IT A MAJOR BLUNDER.

7. ISRAELI AID TO IRANIANS: IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM THE SENATOR, SALAM SAID THAT IN LEBANON IT WAS GENERALLY BELIEVED THAT THE ISRAELIS WERE AIDING THE IRANIANS AGAINST IRAQ. NOTING THAT THE ISRAELIS WOULD HELP ANYONE THAT WAS ANTI-ARAB, HE ALSO SAID THAT MANY ARABS BELIEVED THAT ISRAEL WAS HELPING IRAN AT THE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

STATE

82 7852292 SCO

PAGE 004

NC 7852292

TOR: 211938Z JAN 82

BEHEST OF THE US. SALAM AVOIDED SAYING THAT HE HIMSELF BELIEVED THESE THINGS BUT SIMPLY NOTED THAT ISRAELI-IRANIAN TIES WERE DAMAGING TO THE US POSITION IN THE ARAB WORLD.

8. INTERNAL LEBANESE SITUATION: SALAM TOLD THE SENATOR THAT HE BELIEVED THAT 95 PERCENT OF LEBANON'S CHRISTIANS AND 95 PERCENT OF ITS MUSLIMS WERE READY FOR A RECONCILIATION. HE URGED THAT THE US CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE UNDERSTANDING AMONG LEBANESE GROUPS AND CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN LEBANON'S CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. HE WAS SHARPLY CRITICAL OF SOME "COMMUNIST" GROUPS WITHIN THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT BUT SAID THEY WERE SMALL AND UNREPRESENTATIVE.

9. SENATOR PERCY'S SIDE OF THIS CONVERSATION WAS MAINLY CONFINED TO ASKING QUESTIONS. HE ASSURED SALAM OF THE US' INTENT TO ENCOURAGE COMPROMISE AND RECONCILIATION WITHIN LEBANON. OF THE SENATOR'S OWN STRONG COMMITMENT OF THE RIGHT OF ISRAEL TO EXIST WITHIN SECURE BOUNDARIES AND OF HIS PERSONAL BELIEF THAT A SOLUTION TO THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM WAS CENTRAL TO PEACE IN THE AREA. THE SENATOR AVOIDED DIRECT COMMENT ON HOW THE SYRIANS MIGHT BE GOTTEN OUT OF LEBANON BUT NOTED HIS RECENT CORDIAL TALKS WITH PRESIDENT ASSAD AND THE EFFORTS OF THE US IN COOPERATION WITH THE SAUDIS AND OTHERS TO HELP CREATE A SITUATION IN LEBANON THAT WOULD PERMIT INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE ON THE SYRIANS TO WITHDRAW.

10. CODEL HAS NOT SEEN THIS TELEGRAM.  
DILLON

END OF MESSAGE

CONFIDENTIAL